

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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USIA-06 OMB-01 /069 W

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R 261240Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9446

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TUNIS 3854

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR OVIP TS

SUBJECT: BOURGUIBA BACK IN TUNIS

REF: TUNIS 3357

1. PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA RETURNED JUNE 24 TO TUNIS FROM HIS 20-DAY REST CURE AT BRIDES-LES BAINS, FRANCE. HE WENT DIRECTLY FROM AIRPORT TO THE MUNICIPAL PARK AND PRESIDED OVER THE OPENING OF A MILITARY DISPLAY OF MEN AND EQUIPMENT STAGED TO CELEBRATE 19TH ANNIVERSARY OF CREATION OF THE TUNISIAN ARMED FORCES. AWARDED MEDALS OF ORDER OF INDEPENDENCE TO HANDFUL OF OFFICERS, MOSTLY SENIOR. HE VISITED A NEARBY, NEWLY-OPENED OFFICERS CLUB. LATER IN DAY SENIOR OFFICERS AND WIVES ATTENDED DINNER AT PRESIDENTIAL PALACE ALONG WITH CABINET AND POLITICAL BUREAU MEMBERS.

2. BOURGUIBA'S REMARKS ON ARRIVAL AT TUNIS INCLUDED STATEMENT THAT PRESIDENT IS HIGHLY SATISFIED WITH MANNER IN WHICH PRIMIN NOUIRA CONDUCTED PUBLIC AFFAIRS
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DURING BOURGUIBA'S ABSENCE. BOURGUIBA ADDED THAT HS STAY IN FRANCE HAD BEEN GOOD FOR HIS HEALTH, "WHICH

IS NOW EXCELLENT."

3. BOURGUIBA JUNIOR HAS TOLD US PRESIDENT DID IN FACT
LOSE SOME WEIGHT, BUT WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER HIS
DOCTORS ARE SATISFIED.

4. COMMENT: PUBLIC UNDERSTANDS BOURGUIBA'S PRAISE FOR
NOUIRA'S CONDUCT, AS ACTING-PRESIDENT, AS A REFUTATION
OF RUMORS THAT PRESIDENT WOULD BLAME NOUIRA (AND POSSIBLY
REPLACE HIM) FOR TWO SCANDALS CURRENTLY THE SUBJECT OF
MUCH LOCAL CONVERSATION: THE CRACKING OF A NETWOEK OF
SYSTEMATIC CUSTOMS VIOLATORS, INCLUDING RATHER SENIOR
CUSTOMS OFFICIALS: AND THE LEAK AND SALE OF CERTAIN
EXAMINATION QUESTIONS SUBSEQUENTLY USED IN THE ANNUAL
BACCALAUREAT EXAMINATIONS. THE NOUIRA GOVERNMENT
HAD PUBLICIZED BOTH MATTERS AND MADE A NUMBER OF
ARRESTS IN EACH CASE, THOUGH RUMOR HAS IT THAT THERE
ARE STRONG PRESSURES TO SUPPRESS THE CUSTOMS SCANDAL
BEFORE IT REACHES TOO HIGH. ALL STUDENTS WHO HAD SAT
FOR EXAMS INVALIDATED BY THE LEAK OF QUESTIONS ARE
NOW TAKING NEW BACCALAUREAT TESTS.
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